

Appreciating *Wallander* at the BBC: producing culture and performing the glocal in the UK and Swedish *Wallanders* for British public service television.

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This article explores how the different versions of Wallander, all in some ways remakes of the original detective books written by bestselling Swedish author Henning Mankell, are collected together by the BBC into as a corpus of television. The central purpose is to understanding how the Nordic-based procedurals featuring the protagonist Kurt Wallander are positioned as a privileged form of culture at the BBC. Looking in particular at how the various performances of this titular character are made sense of in the UK public service broadcasting televisual flow and beyond, the article takes up the task of considering how the BBC use the remakes to imagine its role as a cultural institution with public service responsibilities at a time when television is increasingly produced and consumed globally.

Key words: *Wallander*; Swedish and UK; Kenneth Branagh; Krister Henriksson; Rolf Lassgård; BBC, public service television and culture.

Grisly homicides. Mutilated corpses that speak of social schism. Plots as bleak as the low, open landscape of Skåne. A propensity for introspection and a melancholic detective who brings as much psychological baggage to the crime scene as the forensic team do kit. This is the forbidding fictional world of *Wallander*, first a series of books created by bestselling Swedish author Henning Mankell, followed by nine adapted movies made by Sveriges Television, a Swedish television series and later a high-end British-produced primetime drama. Each of these media texts is available on a range of BBC platforms, and it is the aim of this essay to investigate how these

Nordic-based procedurals offer a vibrant conversation about the universalism-and-particularism of a television fiction franchise—all in one way or another remakes of the original detective fiction—within the context of *producing* culture for the UK's leading public service broadcaster. The article takes up the critical task of understanding how a belief in the value of *Wallander* is formed at the BBC through its collection of various versions into a TV corpus. My argument focuses on the confrontation, or friction, created in the encounter with the (cultural) Other, related to how these various texts are positioned in dialogue with each other; and how—opened up in that 'in-between' space—public service television is searching for proximity to privileged systems of classification and taste, which serves a legitimating function, justifying the BBC's role as a cultural institution for the nation.

There are no less than three versions of maverick detective Kurt Wallander circulating within the BBC ecology. Each performance is different, but remains relatively faithful to the weary dishevelment—both in dress and demeanour—of the literary original. These varied interpretations openly invite a comparative reading (including reference to the novels), of which Vicky Frost from *The Guardian* writes, 'all three actors' portrayals are admired, with "best Wallander" debates prompting sometimes furious and passionate debate' (2014b). Krister Henriksson was the first to appear as Wallander on British TV screens at the centre of an ensemble drama. In the Swedish language, this 2005-6 television series aired on BBC Four with English subtitles in 2008. It is based on (rather than adapted from) the books, but adopts the democratic ambition of Mankell's original novels with its social commentary on the state of contemporary Swedish civil society. This version was ahead of the Sunday night primetime BBC One adaptation starring Kenneth Branagh, a performance that emphasised the solitude and psychological interior of the character. Another version followed in Christmas 2010, this time featuring Rolf Lassgård, who physically resembled most closely the Kurt Wallander from the books, but at the same time delivered yet another dimension to the mercurial investigator. Straight adaptations from the Mankell novels, the original, feature-length Swedish language films from 1994 to 2007 were broadcast with English subtitles on the BBC digital channel Four. The poignant farewell for Henriksson as Wallander transmitted on Saturday 21 June 2014; but in October 2014 the BBC commissioned a final, three-part series with Branagh, to which Ben Stephenson, Controller, BBC Drama Commissioning,

declared: 'It is only right that we bring the final chapter of the brilliant and ground-breaking *Wallander* to BBC One which is set to be a dark, thrilling and emotional finale' (Jeffrey 2014).

No matter which language he speaks the BBC seems to have developed something of an obsession with the Swedish sleuth. So what is it about this titular character that appeals to the UK's public service broadcaster? In and through studying how the various performances of *Wallander* are textually and critically positioned and talked about in relation to one another, this article primarily considers how the BBC uses these remakes of the Swedish-based crime stories to deliver a creative and strategic vision and define its public service role at a time of changing priorities and new commercial pressures, both national and global. In a word, I want to stress what important statements these different *Wallanders* make about the BBC as a purveyor of culture in the United Kingdom, with output that, in the words of the BBC Trust, 'should be distinctive ... breaks new ground, develops fresh approaches, sets trends, and takes creative risks' (BBC Trust ANON).

***Wallander* and the (cultural) other**

It is almost impossible to speak about why the BBC has shown so much interest in *Wallander* without first acknowledging the global popularity of *The Kurt Wallander Mysteries*, a series of 11 books, written by Henning Mankell (Peacock 2014, 1-7; Waade and Jensen 2013, 190; Forshaw, 2012, 1-15; Nestingen and Arvas 2011, 1; Nestingen 2008). Before the unprecedented success of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium*-trilogy—*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played With Fire* and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest*, and fuelling the trend for Nordic noir, came Mankell with *Wallander*. Mankell first introduced his shambolic, deeply troubled detective in the novel, *Mördare utan ansikte*, initially published in Sweden in 1990 and later translated into English as *Faceless Killers* in 1997. More than 40 million books have since been sold worldwide and the stories translated into 41 different languages.

The *Wallander* stories have thus proved remarkably adept in the way in which they have crossed borders, adapted and flowed into different and varied national territories. It is a type of storytelling particularly amenable to cultural exchange and its ability to migrate confirms what Joseph Strauhbaar says about 'cultural shareability', advanced by Arvind Singhal and Kant Udonpim (1997), which 'refers to

common values, images, archetypes and themes across cultures that permit programmes to flow across cultural boundaries' (2007, 201). *Wallander* is, for example, set in the commercial seaport of Ystad, located in the far southern region of Skåne. International trade and historical settlement with its mediaeval centre, migratory movements and an entrenched isolationism afforded by the vast flatlands of the territory define Ystad's borderland status: the town represents an in-between space where a provincial, almost backward-looking Sweden meets the modern cosmopolitan world. It marks new and old movements, connecting Europe with Russia and the Baltic States, where historic Cold War politics encounter modern European identities and commercial trading routes involving goods and people (Bergman 2012, 56-78; Everett 2005, 7-14; Westerståhl Stenport 2007).

This relationship to the Other is central to how scholars like Kerstin Bergman (2014) interpret *The Kurt Wallander Mysteries*. More than any other Swedish crime writer contends Bergman, Mankell consistently explore the theme of 'the problematic relationship to the Other ... mirroring the increasing problems with xenophobia in Sweden in the last decades' (2014, 55). It is widely known that Mankell started writing the *Wallander* stories after spending several years living in Africa, which he says 'made him a "better European"' (Thomson 2003). On his return he found a different country, a more xenophobic, troubled society; or as Shane McCorristine puts it, 'Mankell's major concern at the outset of the [*Wallander*] project was to highlight the alarming rise in racism, xenophobia and anti-immigration feeling in Sweden' (2011, 78). This perspective, seeing the local from a distance, contributes to a disorientating sense of the world created by Mankell, where, according to Bergman, 'Wallander feels lost and alienated in a Sweden he perceives as changing. He repeatedly claims to feel like a stranger, or perhaps rather obsolete: like a dinosaur in the present version of his home country' (2014, 56).

This article takes up Bergman's observation about coming up against the Other, describing how 'Wallander himself could be considered the Other of the equation, now that he appears as obsolete in relation to younger generations of Europeans' (2014 66). Encountering the Other and the resulting confrontation between different texts that together creates 'in-between-ness' is a theme this article will explore in some depth and in a variety of different ways. In particular the question of placing texts in a relationship to, and engaging with, the Other is crucial

to how the UK's leading public broadcaster approaches the acquisition, commissioning and scheduling of the various *Wallander* remakes. It opens up a space 'between' and it is this idea of the 'in-between' that is subsequently formed that I offer as my contribution to the debate on transnational TV remakes. This 'in-between' space I argue alerts us to a curatorial practice of the BBC that references to its public service remit in terms of privileging a distinct sense of culture in an age defined by globalisation and neoliberal market forces. It is about reclaiming television as a form of art in relation to what Pierre Bourdieu referred to as 'the principle of position-takings' (1993, 35), where each text offers a 'space of creative works'. 'The work of art,' Bourdieu claims, 'is an object which exists as such only by virtue of the (collective) belief which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art' (ibid). Within such a process is the curating signature of the BBC—drawing connections between different platforms and services, the complex differences of countries and societies, different national interpretations and aesthetic styles. It produces a distinctive definition of culture in relation to public service broadcasting, thus legitimising 'a leading reputation for creative and innovative programming' (BBC Trust ANON). Witnessed is the space of position-taking, in which the distinctive *value* of the *Wallander* collection is established in and through a series of movements and encounters involving institutions and forms of symbolic power. If we look at how the various performances of Kurt Wallander at the BBC are positioned, the resulting 'in-between' space creates a particular type of television—one that defines an *experience* of exposure to different cultures from around the world, of adopting a *distinctive* approach to culture, and *maintaining* a reputable brand in an increasingly global media market. It is first necessary, before exploring how the different performances together form this 'in-between', to give some context as to why the BBC has chosen to collect these *Wallander* texts into a corpus.

***Wallander* at the BBC: society, societal values and the politics of (public) culture**

'What is happening to the Swedish welfare state in the 1990s?' wrote Mankell in the foreword to his collection of short stories, *Pyramiden* (1999) | *The Pyramid* (2009). 'How will democracy survive if the foundation of the welfare state is no longer intact? Is the price of Swedish democracy today too high and no longer worth paying?'

(2009, 1). This theme of how we think about society, so central to these Swedish-based detective stories, dialogues in so many ways with how the BBC as an institution is trying to make sense of its enterprise as a public service provider in the contemporary age. Just as the *Wallander* novels offer a nation-specific reply to shifts in Sweden's commitment to social democratic principles in the wake of neo-liberalism and the cultures of globalisation, the BBC is experiencing a similar crisis of identity. Since the late 1990s, with the arrival of multichannel television, digitalisation and media convergence, and stoked by neoliberal economic reform that has engulfed the British media, including the BBC, leading to market deregulation and the rhetoric of choice, the legitimacy of what we might mean by public service has undergone a transformation. Pervasive anxieties about encroaching bureaucracy into public service explored in the original *Wallander* stories, and dealt with in both Swedish versions, resonate with how the BBC is responding to increased parliamentary scrutiny, as it redefines its role and purpose, 'adjusting old policies for new market-based solutions and consumer-oriented thinking' (Born 2005, 68). Georgina Born said it best when she wrote,

What kind of organisation is the BBC, and why does it matter? Why should we be interested in what it is rather than what it produces? ... Above all it matters because it affects what is made. The way creative practices and processes are organised, and who gets to make programmes, powerfully influence the extent to which the BBC is able to fulfil its public service broadcasting ambitions. (67)

This perspective on the identity formation of the BBC helps provide insight into how the Corporation imagines what it means to be a public body and its relevance as a cultural institution. Its function to deliver broadcasting as 'public service' for the nation defines its approach to *producing* culture: or, as the BBC Trust phrase it, 'a public space for arguing and debating the future. It serves our Nation, not the State' (2011)—a sense of purpose reminiscent of Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as 'an imagined political community' (1991, 6). Constructing what constitutes an autonomous public sphere for thinking about and describing a 'national' culture serves a legitimating function for the BBC, as the Corporation, in

turn, repeatedly utilises and asserts this knowledge about itself to determine its public role as an institution for the nation. Emerging from the contours of research into the sociology of public service broadcasting and public culture is what Born and Tony Prosser define as ‘a tension between broadcasting as culture and as commerce’ (2001, 661). This friction involving culture and commerce provides a context for the field of cultural production in which the BBC currently operates. But what exactly are the discursive, and often broadly accepted and frequently unquestioned ways of understanding and describing a *national* cultural at the BBC at a time of *globalisation*?

Defining what is meant by public culture at the BBC confirms to a large extent what Edward Said (1993) said about the role of culture vigorously and authoritatively supporting power. His *Culture and Imperialism* starts with the premise that institutions of domination are nothing without the power of culture to sustain them. His argument is that culture exerts a kind of moral force, incorporating a refining and elevating component; a society’s repository of ‘the best that has been known and thought’ as Matthew Arnold defined it in 1865 (1914) (Said 1993, xiii). Drawing on Michel Foucault’s notion that the struggle for domination is both systematic and hidden, Said points to the incessant interaction between social classes, nations and regions of power seeking to dominate and displace one another. This is not a random affair, but rather a struggle involving values, an incessant struggle in which the effort to control is also the intention to exist (Said 1976, 36). The usefulness of Said’s conceptualisation of the ‘general worldwide pattern of imperial culture’ (1993, xii) is that it speaks directly to how *Wallander*—the original story, the different remakes, the distinct performances—has, in effect, been colonised at the BBC. In this way of knowing of the Scandinavian Other in and through the ‘in-between’ space is that it effectively demonstrates the link between cultural knowledge and institutional power, for the BBC ‘constructs’ and dominates the foreign in the process of knowing it. The *Wallander* TV corpus participates in, contributes to, and helps to reinforce perceptions and attitudes about the public service broadcaster as delivering ‘the best broadcasting in the world’ (BBC Trust 2011; emphasis mine). So profound and ubiquitous is its self-aggrandising authority that it led to Henriksson to say: ‘I thought, well, we’d better pack up and go home now the BBC is coming. ... I was brought up with BBC productions, and the BBC is really cradle of the crimes for [Swedes] ... we all had an inferiority complex to the

British in a way' (Frost 2014b). Particularly noteworthy, at a deeper level, is that unquestioned cultural dominance of the BBC as delivering a culture from which the world benefits.

What proves valuable about *Culture and Imperialism* for my argument at least is how it 'de-universalises' culture to make visible a local, nation-specific provenance. Cultural studies teaches us that cultural production is deeply invested in the political structures of its society, because this is what propels and stimulates it. But this process is invariably obscured by claims of transcendence and an appeal to the 'universal'. In identifying the 'in-between' space formed through scheduling and the choice of TV drama (itself a cultural artefact of bourgeois sensibilities), the 'universal' themes and 'local' performances, the various textual encounters and the critical rhetoric which stimulates belief in the value of those cultural exchanges (more of which later), the corpus of texts known as *Wallander* at the BBC is habitually presented as occurring in a realm where culture and artistic distinction matters most. How one *Wallander* text is made sense of in and through the constant encountering and critical dialogue with another remake, at both a institutional and critical level, allows the public service broadcaster to invoke an agency of culture that seeks 'to do better, providing high quality programmes and services to as many people as possible' (BBC Trust 2011). This legitimising discourse based on the relentless production of knowledge and recognition, or what Bourdieu called 'symbolic capital' (1993), created in the 'in-between' space reveals a continuously circulating set of assumptions, values, attitudes, ideas, taste preferences, cultural affiliations and critical judgements about its importance as a public body concealed in a tenacious rhetoric about the universality of culture, citizenship and civic importance of serving the nation.

Performing *Wallander* at the BBC

According to Kerstin Bergman, 'Mankell decided in the early 1990s that crime fiction was a better genre if one's aim was to discuss important issues in society while simultaneously reaching a large audience' (Bergman 2014, 53). Mankell himself defined this political purpose with the proposed subtitle, 'Novels about the Swedish Anxiety' (2009, 1); and it is this intense sense of social disquiet that is physically embodied in the downbeat insomniac Wallander, overweight and afflicted with

health problems, troubled and disillusioned by how fallible and intolerant his society has become. How this idea of the social | corporeal body is inscribed into the very fabric of the different representations and performances reveal the located-ness of the various nation-specific productions; but it is *only* in the 'in-between' space where these various texts encounter one another that what Said calls a 'a structure of attitude and reference' (1993) about culture and cultural production at the BBC comes into focus. The various films and TV remakes of *Wallander*, both foreign and domestic, do not necessarily challenge the reputation of the BBC, but more or less hold its cultural mission in place.

For a start the *Wallander* texts have been co-opted so manifestly to meet the varied requirements of the BBC's media environment, with various services and digital platforms requiring content. The *Wallanders* ensure a *diversity* of provision, animating national differences and enabling the Corporation to foreground the specificities of its different services—BBC One, BBC Four, BBC iPlayer, DVD boxsets—at complementary levels. Crossing borders, traversing media platforms: each *Wallander* plays its part in the coherent whole—with varying degrees of success, but nonetheless each deepening and contributing to a common sense of what the BBC has to offer. It is in and through the 'in-between' space opened up between one text and another that the TV corpus rationalises BBC policymaking. It makes sense, for example, of how its digital services explicitly function to compliment the main channels, with BBC Four institutionally positioned to work closely with BBC One. Scheduling the different *Wallanders* in different areas makes visible complementariness so essential in the age of convergence. A public service synergy is achieved in and through what each series says about the purpose and cultural affiliations of the platform on which it appears. This diversity of provision further fuels the core function of the BBC as public service, namely: to heighten expectations and offer distinct approaches, which help build into a diverse cultural experience.

What also emerges is how the BBC frames the importance of series like *Wallander* that might otherwise get lost in the schedule. It is instructive, for example, to see how Richard Klein, former Controller of BBC Four, talks about programming at the digital channel.

We are different from virtually every other digital channel because we don't strip and strand. *We curate moments and seasons and ideas.* We apply a lens to a subject matter, and through that lens you will see subject matter in a different way. (Rushton 2009, 28; emphasis mine)

More than a scheduler Klein casts himself in the role of curator. This notion of a curatorial sensibility and curating 'moments and seasons and ideas' immediately evokes a different approach to thinking about and scheduling television. It speaks to a way in which the TV 'curator' intervenes and allows for what Laura Marks describes as an, 'interaction between works and the audience to unfold' (2004, 38). For sure BBC Four has not conceived any new features for defining culture and undoubtedly not discovered any new markers. But it has, nonetheless, put forward new ways of talking about and understanding what a public service delivery of culture might look and 'feel' like at the BBC at a time when the context of cultural production increasingly exceeds the borders of territorial states.

Selecting the subtitled Swedish *Wallanders* alongside the BBC One adaptation suggests a way of putting television together in stimulating ways, creating rupture and contradictions, but also a complementariness. This 'curated' schedule implies an argument. Nourished in this dialectic of the 'in-between' space of the various film-TV remakes emerges a series of interventions between the unique value of an 'authentic' cultural work and the located-ness of an original piece of television, the integrity of a text and the positioning of the viewer to make sense of it in relation to another (referencing its literary origins).

The choice of the subtitled Swedish films and TV series also adds something distinct to the BBC Four portfolio. It contributes to the digital channel's allure as it consecrates *this* public sphere as a unique destination for what cannot be seen elsewhere. Just as the BBC seeks to 'protect' the BBC Four's 'highly valued role in offering the best of foreign language drama and film from across the world' (BBC Trust 2011), the notion of curating *Wallander* speaks not only to shaping the perception of this kind of television as something worth watching, but how that experience is made meaningful through the prism of knowledge generated by the different ways of thinking about, and critically engaging with, the same basic story idea as it flows in and through the BBC media ecology. Revealed in this 'in-between'

space of selection and 'position-taking', of collecting 'the best of television' from around the globe and scheduling its presentation according to the classificatory logic of the BBC, is a self-confidence to intervene into culture in a very specific way. At a deeper level, this curatorial act represents a bid for legitimacy, where what the BBC has to say about culture matters most, with this text and not that; and because of the underlying 'structure of attitude and reference' (Said 1993, 21), the TV corpus is carefully and critically positioned to be read in particular ways as to illuminate a definition of culture defined by exclusivity and qualitative distinction.

Strindbergian gloom and Swedish authenticity: Krister Henriksson on BBC Four

It has long been understood that critically acclaimed, original programming affords minority cable | satellite and digital services a way of recruiting viewers and differentiating themselves within a competitive television market. Of late BBC Four has found critical success with imported programming from the periphery of the global television market. Foreign language television has rarely found sustained distribution in the UK, but starting in the summer of 2006 with French *policier* series, *Spiral* (*Engrenages*, 2005-present), BBC Four has built a reputation with its dramas from continental Europe—including *Wallander*. In contrast to the more commercially-minded channels like Sky, which operate in accordance to the laws of competition to create the most lucrative market possible, BBC Four operates in what Bourdieu calls, 'the field of restricted production,' which 'tends to develop its own criteria for the evaluation of its products, thus achieving the truly cultural recognition accorded by the peer group whose members are both privileged clients and competitors' (1993, 115). Note, for example, how Cassian Harrison, the channel editor, interprets the cultural intervention of BBC Four.

I want BBC4 to have big *impact*. We need to think about what impact means. For me, it's not doing what we normally do, it's about changing the *pitch*, *tone* and *content* from business as usual (Kanter 2014; emphasis mine).

If 'BBC4 is the BBC at its best, supporting riskier, lesser known projects that would otherwise struggle to find airtime' (ibid), then how it has been able to bring to the

fore little known, or so-called 'marginal' television from the global media landscape, and give it primetime visibility—Saturday evenings at 9pm—speaks to how difference is defined through the cultural and institutional power of the BBC to reverse dominant (American) media flows and speak instead to a new regional media cartography. Argued here is that what the BBC believes it is delivering with these interpretations of *Wallander* is a cosmopolitan cultural experience involving global media flows and exclusive contra-flows as a form of symbolic capital.

This particular approach involves the question of understanding 'the field of restricted production' governing this kind of television, of which Bourdieu describes.

Works produced by the field of restricted production are 'pure', 'abstract' and 'esoteric'. They are 'pure' because they demand of the receiver a specifically aesthetic disposition in accordance with the principles of their production. (1993, 120)

In the cultural field known as BBC Four, the Swedish *Wallanders* accumulate a form of symbolic capital based on 'cultural rarity' and 'function as elements of social distinction' (ibid). Economic profits (amplified in the publicity fanfare accompanying the Sky Atlantic US offerings with HBO originals) are disavowed in favour of a cultural capital that is normally associated with an appreciation of 'high' (or at least higher) culture—existential Nordic angst and preferences for Scandinavian art, literature, cinema and music (Waade and Jensen 2013), from Edvard Munch to the films of Swedish *auteur* Ingmar Bergman (an association further by the fact that his daughter Eva is married to Mankell) and 'serious' stories that possess a high degree of socio-political, cultural, educative and moral force.

Performance reinforces this cultural consecration. Placing emphasis on distinct (cultural) categories of acting, as well as (national) performative styles and traditions, helps the public service broadcaster conserve hierarchies of cultural capital. What distinguishes Krister Henriksson's performance over Lassgård, within the BBC cultural context at least, is its interiority; or as Vicky Frost describes,

We see just the right amount of cog-whirring on screen; it's a contained performance with a certain stillness at its centre, regardless of the dashing about the crime-solving that goes with it. (2014a)

Frost acknowledges that Henriksson always comes out of the 'best' Wallander debates 'pretty well. He says he often wishes he could explain why British viewers have fallen so hard for his portrayal' (2014b). The answer to this query may in fact lie with how the 'stillness' of his performance belongs firmly within 'the field of restricted production'. It is 'esoteric' and 'pure' requiring interpretation. Lassgård may be an established Swedish film star, and physically embody more the crapulousness of the original character, but Henriksson's measured delivery and stillness brings yet another distinctive approach to the role, further enhancing 'the dialectic of cultural distinction' (Bourdieu 1993, 115) which the 'in-between' space brings to the fore. Of Henriksson's last outing as Wallander, struggling with early-onset Alzheimer's, critic Phil Hogan wrote:

Henriksson rose wonderfully to the job. His Wallander—emotionally difficult, brooding and self-fancying—has never invited the viewer's warmth, but in his Lear-like roaring against this new, cruel, unreadable fate we feared for him and of course ourselves. Away from the furtive denial and important rage, though, Wallander's changing mental state—a moment of bewilderment, a vanishing thought—was marked by the smallest of adjustments, a reminder that the TV detective's condition already manifests itself in puzzlement, rumination and absent-mindedness (2014)

As someone who already had a substantial and successful career as an actor in Sweden, his naturalistic acting style evokes the tradition of Ingmar Bergman and those filmic performances of the soul. Henriksson, in fact, worked with Bergman several times in the theatre; he also starred as the young director in *Faithless*, a 2000 film directed by Liv Ullmann, based on Bergman's recommendation. Within the field of cultural legitimacy, the more the individual performance orients towards culturally pertinent features heavily endowed with value, the more legitimacy it

appears to possess. Endowed with particular markers of distinction (a manner, a 'naturalistic' style) the Henriksson performance is anchored in an established, historical taxonomy defining Swedish film and theatre culture. Such a discourse of distinction is structured in the distribution of a specific capital of recognition propelling the migratory movement.

The *Wallander* series starring Henriksson are not adapted from the original novels, unlike the Branagh and Lassgård versions, but instead new mysteries based on ideas from Henning Mankell. Stories are original; but it is the choice of Henriksson in the central role which authenticates this version of *Wallander* at the BBC, as Vicky Frost notes: 'The six new films have so far been a slightly varying standard, with the quality of Henriksson's acting sometimes outweighing that of the plotting or scripts' (2014a). Where the central pleasure lies, for Frost at least, is within the performance given by Henriksson.

[He] is a pleasure to watch as Wallander: for me, he has the requisite level of weary dishevelment, crumpled in an appealing kind of way, both his clothes and face displaying the lines of a man preoccupied with greater things. (2014a)

What emerges from this particular strand of critical response goes beyond the Strindbergian bleakness and relates more to another culturally privileged form of European literary and film featuring a hero psychologically rooted in his social world. Seduced by 'the leisurely, layered craft with which Mankell establishes the humanity of his policemen', writer Maggie Gee claims that the *Wallander* stories possess the 'density and pleasurable authority of a 19th-century novel' (Thomson 2003). Critical interpretation of Henriksson, both at the BBC and beyond, ties his performance firmly into this cultural field.

Institutional affiliations and critical affirmations give a setting for the Henriksson performance and propagate its cultural value in this regard, providing further background information on the actor, but also on the conceptual framework that fuels the 'in-between' space of the *Wallander* corpus. Nordicana, the UK festival of Nordic fiction and film, including Scandinavian food and merchandise, and co-sponsored by the *Radio Times* (the weekly TV and radio listings magazine, founded

and originally published in-house by BBC Magazines), plays host to actors like Henriksson and Lassgård. Invited to talk about and reflect on their craft to 'agents of consecration' (Bourdieu 1993, 121) like TV critics and cultural commentators, in front of an audience distinguished in the Bourdieuan sense by particular taste and preference sensibilities that 'classifies the classifier' (1984, 6), these events provide a 'thinking' space, a place to remember television, often while it still reverberates in the culture, but also to form new links between the different versions of *Wallander*. The *Radio Times*' sponsorship of Nordicana 2014 is interesting in this respect, as the partnership contributes further to the field of restricted production and adds another interim space, triggering new connections and ways of thinking about *national* distinctiveness and *cultural* performances.

Imagining Sweden and embodying existentialist angst: Kenneth Branagh on BBC One

In direct contrast to the more socially-minded ensemble dramas of the Swedish *Wallanders*, the BBC version pivots far more on the central performance of Kenneth Branagh. His interpretation of the troubled detective dominates nearly every scene in each of the 90-minute adaptations, an observation that can only be made within this 'in-between' space, allowing Helen Rumbelow to observe: 'Branagh dominates in a way that the controlled, reflective Wallander in the Swedish version does not' (2010, 14). Known for his critically acclaimed and award-winning roles on stage and screen, particularly Shakespeare, Branagh brings considerable reputation and a very British acting sensibility to the role of Wallander. At the time of initial broadcast, Branagh, along with co-star Tom Hiddleston (who plays Martinsson), was treading the boards of the West End as Ivanov, the Chekhov play where his performance received critical praise and played to packed theatres every night for three months, leading one TV reviewer to remark: 'Branagh, who brings to the role all the intensity and passion he recently brought to Chekhov's *Ivanov* in London's West End, and you have a detective who is easily the most tortured to have ever graced the small screen' (Rampton 2008, 16). Few critics failed to mention the raw intensity and emotion that Branagh brought to the role, of which the actor himself said.

'What happens is you get hit by a situation where really it is impossible to evoke any other kind of reaction,' he says of the crying. 'It's an imaginative

response. I don't suddenly think about terrible things in my own life or losing my parents. I don't bring another thing in. I just put myself there' (Davies 2008, 3).

Branagh's return to the small screen with a performance that, to the minds of critics like James Walton (2008), elevated the production way above the average detective drama profoundly defined how this British adaptation feeds deeply ingrained BBC cultural pretensions.

In her review Jaci Stephen connects the located-ness of Ystad to glocal performance primarily through aesthetics: 'The Swedish landscape ... shot beautifully in scenes of light and shade that mirror the inner thoughts of Wallander and the progress of the work he does, feels like a character in its own right' (2008, 21). Unlike its Swedish counterparts, the British remake is far more stylised and exploits new camera technologies in its conception. *Wallander* with Branagh was the first BBC production filmed using the RED digital camera, delivering one of the Corporation's public purposes to use new technologies to 'enhance the quality and impact of programming' (BBC Trust, Anon). The use of the camera technology is intensified by the cinematography of Anthony Dod Mantle, who himself worked closely with Danish co-founders of the Dogma 95 movement Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg. 'Using a 35mm lens,' says CEO of Left Bank Pictures (the production company responsible for the BBC adaptation) Andy Harries, '[the cinematography] clearly provides a big step towards feature-film style aesthetics' (Peacock 2014, 159). Because the camera 'records four times the resolution of HD as raw data' the technology allows for 'much more detail in the image' (Pennington 2008, 22). 'Branagh's *Wallander* is fine, sophisticated television brought to new heights by one thing: cinematography,' said Rumbelow. 'It's not even a stretch to use the word cinema in relation to this small-screen experience. It has on many occasions the look and feel of a David Lynch or Coen Brothers or any of those other modern laureates of rotten modern landscapes' (2010, 14). Developments such as the new camera technology, designed for the new HD TV delivery services, not only enhance the aesthetic quality of the production, but impact on how *Wallander* is classified and considered as a work of art.

This 'more detail in the image', in particular, impacts on the ability of the production to privilege a unique, almost 'pure' performance—its gestures and detailed movements, nuances and subtle shades in mood and tone. This is observed by Tom Sutcliffe, who writes, 'the camerawork is as attentive to the contours of Branagh's stubbly, despairing face as it was to the Swedish locations in which the action took place or the bruised pastels of a Munch sunset' (2008, 21). The extreme, near-voyeuristic focus of the camera trains an intense visual gaze on the emotional and physical disintegration embodied in the performance—the greying stubble and hollow eyes, the thickening of the girth. The RED camera producing images sharper than normal high definition deliberately positions the viewer to see the artistry of a performance, described by Hiddleton as 'getting inside Wallander's head and seeing how the horror effects his psyche' (Rampton 2008, 16). Put another way, the worth of the Branagh performance, but also its meaning, is made in the structure of its technological expression and consecrated in the 'in-between' space which circulates judgements of taste and participates in establishing its specific value for the BBC.

The psychological interiority of Wallander is translated anew, as the Branagh performance *embodies* the emotional and physical collateral of the crime, a troubled man profoundly affected by the crimes he has witnessed; or as Craig McLean put it, 'Branagh is a revelation as Kurt Wallander ... Branagh inhabits the role and the role inhabits him' (2010, 35). In *Faceless Killers* (2: 1), for example, xenophobia is the crime internalised by Wallander—his guilt over alerting right-wing vigilantes to suspicions that migrant workers may have been responsible for the murder of the Lovgrens, and anxiety over failing to show enough enthusiasm for daughter Linda's (played by Jenny Spark) new Syrian boyfriend, Jamal (Arsher Ali). Whereas the Swedish versions give a strong aesthetical sense of the social world in which Wallander inhabits, the UK adaptation offers a more interior landscape conveying the existential angst of its protagonist in and through the new camera technologies.

Where the subject matter is dark, and the hero so down, and the country so cold the obvious palette to choose would be dusks and shadows. But instead this British version goes in the other direction—each scene is almost bleached out into whiteness, the saturation turned down. This is mesmerizingly effective. The characters are leached of colour. The vast

sky is milky white. We see Wallander's world: faded from joy, with no light and dark, only nuance. It is explored. It is beautiful. (Rumbelow 2010, 14)

As Wallander becomes lost for words at the unraveling of the Swedish social order, the performance captured in such intense and dazzling aesthetic detail dialogues with what Bourdieu called 'the power of art to constitute everything aesthetically ... [and] the power of form to establish aesthetically any reality whatsoever' (1993, 208, 209). Aesthetics ruptures the bond with the Swedish local; the pictorial imagination of representing the performance of Wallander as possessed of particular dispositions (morality, ethics, human misery) may be 'due to the intense, near-voyeuristic focus of the camera on the emotions of their hero' (Davies 2008, 3), but it is *only* in the in-between space shaping the 'aesthete's eye' in which it is constituted as a work of art (Bourdieu 1993, 257).

Bodies of evidence: conclusion

'So which Kurt is the deepest?' ran the title of a television review in 2010. Such a question marks the tendency of criticism devoted to the task of answering, as well as the act of providing creative interpretation. My thesis has not merely been about comparatively placing one text alongside the next, one performance as opposed to another, but I have tried to show how the 'in-between' space between the various remakes offers an institutional place where the experience of these works are being endowed with cultural value and 'symbolic capital'. It is about the relation constructed between one performance another and speaking to the very movement that leads from the original to the adaptation, one critical interpretation to another. Note, for example, what TV critic Phil Hogan had to say.

Examining humanity at its worst is no job for a man eaten up with existential issues, and I notice that whereas the original Swedish Wallander (Krister Henriksson ...) is required merely to exude a dour sort of calm, Branagh has been landed with what you might call the full Shakespearean—guilt, fear, self-doubt, regret and stress-related stubble. (2010, 27)

Once the Lassgård version appeared within the BBC media ecology Stuart Evers adds.

Branagh plays up the isolation well, but Henriksson gives us a more rounded picture of the workings inside a police station. They sit either side of the Lassgård's portrayal of Wallander, almost like a triptych offering three different dramatic viewpoints. (Evers 2010)

Rather than enabling the viewer to judge one performance over the other, this kind of criticism endlessly reproduces a belief in the value of the different Wallanders. Criticism participates in the collective enterprise and it is, as Bourdieu describes, another '[act] of delegation of symbolic power' (1993, 258). This type of critical introspection and reflection by professional experts cumulatively contributes to the coding and classifying that conditions access to this restricted field of production.

Long gone are the days when TV originals and their remakes circulated within discrete national broadcasting ecologies, with local audiences having little or no knowledge of the Other's existence. Speaking of how the viewer locates *Wallander* across the BBC, and how this, in turn, enhances audience connectivity and adds to the viewing pleasure and appreciation, BBC Head of Acquisition, and the person who purchased the Swedish *Wallanders*, Sue Deeks says.

People were already familiar with these characters. And also the fact that we had shown the first couple of *Wallanders* and then, coincidentally, BBC One had done their adaptation with Kenneth Branagh, which, of course, reached a much bigger audience than BBC Four. By then, I think, people who had watched the Branagh version on BBC One were perhaps interested to see the Swedish version. (2012)

With different texts existing along side one another, often at the same time, not only does this allow audiences to appreciate the different styles of acting related to national specificity, but also a sense gathers momentum that this critical appreciation *only* comes into view when one performance is played against the other.

‘They are quite different’, the series’ Swedish producer Ole Sondberg says. ‘Where they’re really different is that Branagh really focused on the dark side of the character, whereas if you see the Swedish series, we are trying to achieve more humour, more lightness. We were very afraid that the character would be too dark. (Macnab 2009)

The various interpretations represent a position-taking on *Wallander* at the BBC. ‘If, as Bourdieu wrote, ‘What happens in the field is more and more linked to the field’s specific history and to it alone,’ wrote Bourdieu (1993, 266), then these conjunctions and disjuncture turn the ‘in-between’ space of *Wallander* into a voyage of discovery in its own right, which is ultimately a journey related to a specific field of culture at the BBC.

It is the performance of a man examining humanity at its worst while consumed with existential angst that remains at the heart of the *Wallander* narrative engine. In exploring the ‘in-between spaces that seeks to decipher and appreciate the performances—the dishevelled alcoholic played by Rolf Lassgård to the laconic calm of Henriksson and the Shakespearean gamut of acting emotions offered by Branagh—this contribution has sought to intervene into debates about the transnational media flows with an investigation into how performance functions and travels within and through the UK circuit of media exchange and cultural adaptation. It has looked at how characters like Kurt Wallander act as a national symbolic resource, but made available for differentiated global interpretations and acts of consumption and cultural knowledge. Through dissecting the ‘in-between’ space defining and legitimatising the various interpretations—performance and affect, acting style and criticism—my argument has been to determine the local-cum-global relevance of *Wallander* for the UK’s leading public service broadcaster, as it offers another perspective to the transnational television debate about flows and exchange.

Notes on contributor

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